

# DEPARTMENT OF ATTORNEY GENERAL



**BILL SCHUETTE, ATTORNEY GENERAL**

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The attorney general is a constitutional officer, the chief law enforcement officer of the state, and the head of the Department of Attorney General, a department within the executive branch of state government. The attorney general's duties are prescribed by constitution, statute, court decisions, and tradition. The Office of Attorney General predates statehood, having been established by an 1807 territorial act, and it has been preserved in every constitution of this state since then.

The attorney general is the lawyer for the State of Michigan. When public legal matters arise, he renders opinions on matters of law and provides legal counsel for the legislature and for each officer, department, board, and commission of state government. He provides legal representation in court actions and assists in the conduct of official hearings held by state agencies.

The attorney general is also the lawyer for the people of the State of Michigan and may intervene in any lawsuit, criminal or civil, when the interests of the people of the State of Michigan require. He advises and supervises prosecuting attorneys throughout Michigan. The attorney general also possesses certain investigative powers, including the power to investigate allegations of election fraud and complaints for the removal of public officials. He may also request grand jury investigations of crime in Michigan.

By virtue of the office, the attorney general is a member of various state boards and commissions, including, but not limited to, the State Administrative Board, State Employees' Retirement Board, Judges' Retirement Board, and the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards.

While the attorney general is responsible for representing various state agencies and officials, there is no law that authorizes the attorney general to provide legal services to private individuals or to appear in court on their behalf.

To assist in the myriad functions of the department, the attorney general employs a staff of more than 250 assistant attorneys general, who must be members of the State Bar of Michigan and who are appointed under Michigan Civil Service Rules. In addition, the attorney general has a staff of more than 125 investigators and support staff to assist in carrying out the mandate of the office. All of the legal work performed by the assistant attorneys general, including drafting of opinions and legal documents and representation of client agencies, is done in the name of the attorney general and with his approval, or the approval of his designee.

The department is organized into seven practice groups: Criminal Justice and Victim Rights; Child and Family; Consumer Protection; State Government; Environment and Real Property; State Regulatory; and Civil Rights and Civil Litigation. Additionally, the department includes the Prosecuting Attorneys Coordinating Council, an autonomous entity.

The attorney general maintains offices in Lansing and Detroit in addition to branch offices in Grand Rapids and Marquette.

